

## MEMBER TALK

**MAY 2021**

***ANTIC'S LAND** is among the early and largest operating indoor family theme parks in the Middle East, based on an oriental theme story built up to provide full edutainment, mystery, fun and magical moments and thrills for those young in age and at heart.*

*We are happy to speak with Dr. Janardana Dattakumar, Director of Operations and the chief wizard at Antics Land to learn more about the theme behind the attractions, and how the attraction manages to successfully marry ancient theme with modern game offerings and continues to enjoy high popularity amongst its visitors.*



### **1. Please take our readers to the beginning of the journey with Antic's Land. What is the theme of this FEC, what makes it unique and how was the story created?**

It was in 2006 when I took the helm in Antic's Land and to date the journey has been smooth and enjoyable.

**Antic**, is the fictional mystic hero, around whom the theme of the Antic's Land is woven, he was a very talented young man whose boat drifted and wrecked on the shores of Sharjah. In Sharjah he found a city called Utopia were the technologically was far advanced and people did not have to work. Their occupation was playing games designed by innovative technology, people in Utopia were impressed by Antic's acumen and that led to Antic developing a Games center called Antic's Land.

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2. For our readers who may have never visited your attraction, please share with us what types of rides, attractions and experiences are offered in Antic's Land and what do you feel makes you unique?



appear to be doors to antiquity and the past however what you find inside are some of the most amazing and latest 21<sup>st</sup> century rides and attractions, a VR Zone, roller coaster, a unique concept of Family Bowling and much more...

It is a complete experience of the present draped in a beautiful and thematic picture of the past. To preserving the look and feel of ancient times the machines though they are all the latest 21st century games and rides, bear the look of the lore with dim lighting and dull painting to merge with the ambience. Even display boards and garbage bins are specially designed to reflect the dilapidated sand finishing of the ancient castle look. All these add to the popularity of the Facility among not only the people from other Emirates but also from other GCC countries.

Antic's wrecked boat is what greets you as you approach the portals of Antic's Land. A blend of antiquity and modernity with a touch of ingenuity make Antic's Land in Sharjah unique. Based on an imaginary story but emerging as an ancient castle, the theming of Antic's Land has everything that you expect in a castle of the lore - upside down entrance, dungeon, lanterns, live birds in the turret, skimming exotic snakes in niches. We have a monorail called Griffin which gives our customers an aerial view of the entire facility and all of its magnificent themeing and Dangor's den houses our popular dark ride. Portals may

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**3. We have just completed the Holy month of Ramadan and Eid El Fitr, can you give us some insight on how the business and your visitor numbers were different this year. Was it a successful Eid celebration for Antic's land and if so why?**



The month of Ramadan is usually dedicated for cleaning the rock works and annual maintenance of the rides and machines. The business was remarkably similar to other Ramadan periods in the past with more customers arriving in the evening's after Iftar. The Eid Al Fitr was a great success for us with the revenue, when compared to our average revenues across Eid Al Fitr from 2017, 2018 and 2019, standing at 82 percent despite our capacity being controlled at only 50 percent by the local authorities. In a nutshell, after almost one and half years we are seeing some positive visitor numbers and feel like we are heading back to being in the game!

It was a pleasure to see our wonderful loyal long term customers greeting us with comments such as "long time no see".

**4. Do you have any plans for more operations in the MENA region and if so, can you share some details with us, what can we expect to see and where will it be based?**

We had finalized plans to open in Dubai just prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, for obvious reasons we have decided to keep this in abeyance for future review.

**5. What do you feel are the trends in both new attractions and technology that will be vital to the future of the FEC industry across the MENA region and why?**

Having been confined in their homes for over a year with only computer games as their main source of amusement, I believe that physical attractions will become an extremely popular and coveted form of entertainment for families as restrictions begin to ease. Existing attractions and new attractions with enhanced technology can meet the needs and demands of all age groups and I would say that the fields of virtual reality and augmented reality offering experiences that are lifelike are the ones to watch moving forward.

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A study I recently read states that the 'MENA Family Entertainment Centers Market is expected to reach \$1.68 Billion by 2027'. On an optimistic note it can be observed that such studies will add resilience to the already resilient industry and accelerate the path of recovery. Our aim should be to reach the goal earlier than mentioned! We are hoping for a phenomenal growth and we know our unique location as a central hub makes all of use in the MENA one of the best destinations for tourists all over the world.

**6. As a member of MENALAC, please share with our readers why you feel it is important to be part of the MENALAC family and how this can benefit other Operators in the MENA region.**

Having been in the industry for three and a half decades, I can confirm that MENALAC gives its members the opportunity to share our experience and rub shoulders with stalwarts of the leisure

industry, to learn and to network with likeminded people and the association is truly focused on uniting the MENA Leisure & Attractions industry and enabling its future growth and development.

As the saying goes, '**the more you know, the more you realize you don't know.**' MENALAC through their various member benefits help us all to learn what we don't know and share with others our expertise and advice for 'best practice' in our operations.



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